



# ALASKA TELEHEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

## NEWSLETTER



### Holiday Greetings

by Facilitator Thomas S. Nighswander, MD, MPH

**H**appy holidays to everyone! I am providing a brief update on Alaska Telehealth Advisory Council (ATAC) activities in preparation for the upcoming meeting. The Council will meet on Friday, January 5, 2001, with the meeting hosted by GCI at the Denali Towers building, 16<sup>th</sup> floor conference room.

As we move into the new year, several new faces will be participating on the Council: Mr. John Ayers, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Alaska Communications System; Eric Wall, MD, Medical Director, Premier Blue Cross, replacing Peter West, MD; and Mr. Mike Powers, CEO, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, representing Fairbanks area telemedicine interests.

Presentations at the January meeting will include a draft report on the final recommendations for proposed reimbursement of telemedicine activities; a report on Telemedicine Efficacy project activities; and an update on Telepsychiatry High- and Low-Bandwidth project activities underway in the Aleutian Chain and Ketchikan. As anticipated by the Council, the sponsored projects have revealed some very useful information, including technologies and software that do not work as advertised.

Special reports will be presented by the Alaska Federal Health Care Access Network (AFHCAN) project and the Alaska Distance Education Technology Consortium (ADETC). The ADETC will share recommendations this group is making to Senator Ted Stevens. Several new project proposals for potential joint sponsorship by the Council will also be discussed.

The pending question to the Council as we move forward is ATAC's future within the next year. As the ADETC progresses with their work, the overlapping vested interests are becoming more apparent. The question to the two groups now is--is it time to consider merging the groups.

It's a busy time of year, and your commitment and input in Council efforts is appreciated. I look forward to seeing everyone at the January meeting!

### Next ATAC Meeting:

**January 5, 2001**

**GCI - Denali Towers**

**16th Floor**

**9:30 am - 2:00 pm**

If you have any questions,  
please feel free to contact:

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